

Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire Rekindled Gaiden A Reason to Return

Sirius groaned as he stretched out on the couch. "I'm glad you feel up to writing, Moony. I'm doing good to keep my damn eyes open."

Lupin chuckled quietly, sitting at a desk across the small room. "So rest, Padfoot. You've earned some sleep. I'll get our letter to Albus finished and sent off. I'll probably turn in shortly after."

"Glad we found a cabin to sleep in." Sirius mumbled.

"I still think you should take the bed." Commented Lupin, staring down at the letter in front of him.

"Moony, I can sleep damn near anywhere. I don't need something soft to get a good night's rest." Sirius said.

"All the more reason for you to take it. You need to get back into the habit of sleeping *normally*." Said Lupin, rolling his eyes.

"Calling me abnormal, Moony?"

"In most regards."

"Hey!"

Lupin smirked. "Sorry, Padfoot, but you did bring that one on yourself. There, I think that about does it."

"Got 'er finished?"

"Yeah." Said Lupin, placing the letter in an envelope and attaching it to the leg of the owl that was waiting on the nearby windowsill. "Now then, please take this to Dumbledore for us, alright?"

The owl offered a hoot, taking off into the night. Lupin watched it fly away, only closing the window when he couldn't see it any longer. Tilting his head to either side to pop it, he turned towards the couch. "I wonder how Harry's doing."

"Yeah. He hasn't written in awhile. Tournament should be over soon. I figure Albus will fill us in." Sirius said. "Hope Harry won."

"I'd be grateful if he made it through intact." Said Lupin, leaning against the back of the couch. "In any case, I think I'm heading for bed. If anything happens..."

"Yeah, yeah. If you don't wake up first."

Sirius opened his eyes as the door to the bedroom closed. They had just finished up on one of Dumbledore's missions for them. Nothing important, but it was nice of the old man to give Sirius something to do with his newly-found free time. He had tried sitting around his old house, but found a few too many reminders of his childhood still lingering around.

It had been good for his spirit, traveling around the country with Lupin. Sirius was still amazed at how poorly his old friend had been living. Lavish bed aside, the man hadn't been that much better off than *he* was. At least Sirius had gotten used to the constant depression he experienced in Azkaban. He couldn't quite wrap his head around what his friend had to deal with, trying to get work in a society prejudiced against his 'kind.'

Shaking his head, Sirius closed his eyes again. Dumbledore would likely send a reply by morning. He always did. Until that happened, Sirius would enjoy a nice, relaxing sleep. It had been sheer luck that they had run across the cabin, sitting by itself in the middle of the woods. After setting up some wards to keep people away, the two had set up for the night.

And he wasn't moving until light got in his eyes.

Unfortunately, it wasn't light from the sun that woke him the following morning. It was light from a very rare magical creature. One that, with a passenger, had appeared in the center of the room. Sirius had never been a heavy sleeper, and his time in Azkaban had only worsened his ability to sleep through an entire night uninterrupted.

"You can't just apparate nearby?" Muttered Sirius groggily.

"I am afraid not. Especially not now." Said Albus Dumbledore, who sounded very tired.

"Not now?" Sirius repeated. "Oh god, something's happened, hasn't it? Is Harry alright?!"

It was never a good sigh when Albus Dumbledore sounded upset. Never.

"...Yes. And no. I assume Remus is sleeping in the other room?"

"Was." Came Lupin's tired voice as he opened the bedroom door. "What's going on?"

Sighing, and idly stroking Fawkes' feathers, Dumbledore looked from one Marauder to the other. "I believe," He began, "That some stiff drinks will be in order before I leave this place today."

Sirius' breathing that become very shallow. Lupin put a hand on his friend's shoulder as he passed, sitting down on the other side of the couch. As Dumbledore walked around, conjuring himself a chair to sit in, a large bottle of firewhiskey appeared between the younger men.

"What the hell does 'yes *and* no' mean, Albus?" Asked Sirius.

"It means," Dumbledore said, "That something has happened to Harry. Please do not be alarmed - he is still alright physically."

"...And mentally?" Asked Lupin.

"...He has been fine thus far. Unfortunately, it seems he is purposely bottling up his emotions so his friends will not worry about him." Said Dumbledore.

"What happened to him, dammit?" Asked Sirius, brow creased. "Did it have to do with the Tournament?"

Dumbledore sighed once more. It was going to be a very long morning. "I had hoped," He began, "That this day would never come. But the wishes of a very old man mean nothing to a world that is, more often than not, a very cruel place. The cause of my trip is to

bring bad news directly before you hear it elsewhere. Lord Voldemort has been brought back to life."

"Back... to life?" Lupin said slowly. "You'll have to be a little more clear, Albus. What do you mean?"

"I mean just as I said, I'm afraid. The final Task of the Triwizard Tournament had been rigged by Alastor Moody. The Cup was a portkey. Harry and a friend of his were transported to a graveyard in an as of yet unknown location. There, Peter Pettigrew and Lucius Malfoy helped to bring Voldemort back into this world. He once more has a corporeal form." Dumbledore explained.

"*Wormtail*." Sirius snarled. "Gone back to his old master! So help me if he did anything to Harry..."

"Harry now has a long, thin scar along his right arm from where Pettigrew cut him with a knife. Some of Harry's blood was used in the ritual, along with bone - I suspect the bone to belong to Voldemort's deceased father - and one of Pettigrew's own hands." Dumbledore said, closing his eyes. "Harry was forced to witness Voldemort torture and kill one of his friends once the ritual had been completed."

"My god... how did he escape?" Asked Lupin, his voice very quiet.

"Voldemort's eyes were still new to this world. Harry realized this and used some sort of bright light to temporarily blind his opponents, as Voldemort had indeed summoned his old followers back to him. He ran back towards Cedric Diggory's body and, as he leapt for it, he summoned the portkey Cup. They returned to the empty pitch where the maze for the Third Task had been set up.

"I had asked Alastor to escort Harry up to the castle while I dealt with the chaos that had erupted upon their return. It was a grave mistake that I wish I had never made. Alastor, as it turned out, had been a spy for Voldemort well back into the first war. I can only imagine what happened, as Harry has refused to talk about it. By the time I had arrived, Harry was moments away from literally blowing the man apart. I managed to throw Harry to the side so that his spell only caught Alastor's right arm. But it was enough to completely destroy the limb. Alastor is now under close watch at St. Mungo's.

"Harry spent six days asleep in the hospital wing. Poppy reported that nothing seemed to be wrong with him. And, again, Harry did not say much on the subject himself. I came by the night he had awakened to question him. He was forthcoming with the information, retelling what had happened to him. The following day, the Diggorys came by to speak with him, as well. I saved the boy the pain of recounting his tale yet again, explaining to them myself before I summoned him. They gave him their son's wand in the hopes that it will be of use in what will no doubt be the second war against Voldemort."

"That filthy little rat." Sirius growled, teeth clenched so hard that Lupin worried he'd cause himself injury.

"And you say Harry seems to be fine now?" Asked Lupin.

"He does. But I can see further into his eyes than his friends can, perhaps. There is a deep, twisting turmoil trying to consume the poor boy. I believe he still blames himself for his friend's death, despite coming out and having said that it was mostly due to Alastor and Voldemort. He and Cedric arrived at the Cup at the same time, you see, and decided together to each grab the Cup at the same time." Dumbledore said.

Lupin blew out a quiet sigh as he processed this information. "...What's the plan, Albus?"

"I have called out to the old crowd. The Order of the Phoenix is to be reassembled." Said Dumbledore. "The only issue is where to set up shop, so to speak."

"Take my house." Sirius said, grabbing at the bottle of firewhisky. "Wouldn't mind it being cleaned up. Dunno if you'll be able to get rid of the bitch's portrait, though."

"Sirius."

"I'll talk about the woman however I like." Sirius scowled, glaring aside at Lupin. Then, looking back at Dumbledore, he continued, "Dunno how safe it'll be, though. Got a little horrible house elf that somehow hasn't died yet. He was loyal only to the bitch and only follows my orders because he *has* to."

"I believe that hiding the house itself will be the best solution. Do not worry, I will take care of everything in that regard. As for the house elf, I'm afraid there are few options short of taking his life." Dumbledore said.

"He'd be happy to die. He'd join the bitch as well as the other house elves. Though if he thinks for a moment I'm going to hang his head on the wall near the rest of them, he's insane. ...He's insane anyway, but that isn't the point." Sirius said. "I'd be perfectly willing to off the walking parasite."

"I do not think that will be necessary." Said Dumbledore. "If we secure a room to use as the primary meeting place, we shouldn't have any problems. We will just need to mind our mouths in his presence."

"If you say so." Muttered Sirius, taking a long swig from the bottle and wincing. "Khh... damn, this is strong."

"We'll help in any way we can, Albus." Said Lupin. "When do we begin?"

"Very soon. Unfortunately, it will be difficult gathering together a large group to clean the house until the school year ends. I've already spoken to Arthur and Molly Weasley and they've agreed to join the first team. Sirius, we'll need your help in minding where any traps or other harmful things might be lurking." Dumbledore said.

Sirius closed his eyes. "If I must. I wish there were somewhere else to go, though. I hate being stuck in that place."

"A painful reminder of your childhood, no doubt. But we will make it a completely different place. And I have plans laid out to retrieve Harry from his relatives' house not far into the holiday." Said Dumbledore, smiling as Sirius' head jerked up.

"Really? He'll be coming to stay there for the summer?" Asked Sirius, eyes lighting up.

"He will if you wish him to." Said Dumbledore.

"I'd love nothing more than to get him away from Lily's horrible family." Said Sirius. "Alright, count me in."

"And, of course, I'll be coming along to make sure Sirius doesn't try destroying the house before anyone can use it." Said Lupin.

"Oi!"

Dumbledore chuckled quietly as he watched the two go back and forth for awhile, with Sirius ultimately losing the argument. Getting to his feet, Dumbledore cleared his throat to regain their attention before speaking again. "Well, gentlemen, I must be off. I cannot be away from the school for too long. Especially in such a troubling time. I take it the two of you can make it to Sirius' family home without problem?"

"We'll be fine, Albus." Said Lupin. "We'll start back after lunch."

Dumbledore nodded once and, with Fawkes letting out a melodic trill, was gone in a burst of flames.

"...Voldemort's back." Sirius said, staring at the bottle in his hands for a moment before putting it down. "And Harry had to see him return."

"Hopefully any emotions he's forcing himself to bottle up will spill out once he joins the rest of us at your place, Padfoot." Said Lupin, putting a hand on the other man's shoulder. "I think you two can do one another some good. Maybe the two of you can think of a way to remove your mother's portrait."

A hard gleam passed across Sirius' eyes then, and a feral smile slowly rose. "If anyone can, the two of us will."

"You can work out possible ideas over breakfast, then. I believe it's your turn to cook!" Said Lupin, standing up and stretching.

"My turn?!" Cried Sirius, jumping up as well. "How the hell is it my turn?! I cooked last night!"

"Because I'm still feeling ragged from the last full moon, of course. You wouldn't make me cook in this condition, would you?"

"Taking advantage of my kindness?"

"I'd never dream of it."

With a groan, Sirius moved towards the small kitchen. "Fine, fine. But you assume that this place HAS food to begin with..."

Lupin smirked triumphantly as he watched Sirius search the kitchen. The best way to keep Sirius from worrying himself to death was to keep him busy. And, for better or worse, Lupin planned to ensure that his friend *stayed* busy until they got back to Number Twelve, Grimmauld Place.

oOoOoOoOoOoOo

Author's Notes: Another little side story. Takes place at an undetermined time after Harry wakes up but before the end of the school year, as would be expected. I wanted to put something out to explain why Harry would be going where he'll be going. Nothing more than that, though this ended up being longer than I intended it to be. As of the time of this writing, January 23, 2007 (for future reference and such), chapter 1 of Order of the Phoenix: Reassembled is a third of the way done.

Later, kids!